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Capuchin Vocation Update

Province of St. Joseph

From Crisis to Hope

by Tom Nguyen, Capuchin Novice

(Tom Nguyen continues our series in which the newest members of the Midwest Capuchins and those aspiring to join them describe what they seek in Capuchin religious life.)

There are times I feel as if there is nothing that could bring me down. Our world is a world of technology that helps us to discover new ideas and to accomplish our goals with new methods. There is so much information from the past that we can learn from, and it enables us to move forward with ideas and goals without making the mistakes of history.

But sometimes situations occur that affect us in unexpected ways, and all the material gain, technology, and information that we have aren't enough to help us with our goals for life. This is when the search for meaning in life is difficult. It is when the only thing one can do is to have hope.

I have two little brothers who are 5 and 7 years old. From my viewpoint, they are so care free and have no worries about life. I assume that they only think about their toys and the friends that they have fun with. For the most part, they think about themselves and enjoy life with all the fun that the world can offer. If only I could be a kid again!

But when someone very dear to them—our dad or mom, me or the other brother—is sick or hurt, they begin to let go of their selfishness and to offer their most precious toy or possession to the other person. They realize something is different and is not normal, and try to do everything that they can so that the person or individual will get well. They seem to let down all defenses and only can hope that the one whom they cherish in their lives will be back to normal.

As I continue to mature and grow, I realize there are times when I have been selfish and only worried about myself and my own needs. Only when something important like a crisis happens, do I allow myself to take a look at what I cherish in life. Only when a crisis happens to someone I



Tom with his two brothers

know, do I take a look at how much they mean to me. Only when I open my eyes and take a look at the crisis others endure (i.e., their suffering, pain, and injustices borne), do I evaluate my own self-worth and what I want in life. This even happens when the crisis is about my "brothers and sisters" I don't even know, except for the fact that we all are created by the same God. It is from crises that I have found meaning and value. They also give me hope over the situations nothing in this world can change and over which I have no control.

I need hope in my life. I have realized that the crises that I have gone through affect me on a relational level, dealing with myself, family, friends, the people around me and most importantly my relationship with God. I am a relational being and need to stop the rush and work of my life to discover the meaning in what I do and the values that are there for me. I need to learn how to use this meaning and these values to generate communion and unity for the sake of the kingdom of God.

Prayer is a tool that helps me bring and connect all the pieces together. I still may not understand what is in front of me nor understand the way to go, but I do put into perspective what I long for. It is God's love that I need—that we all need. I wonder how my relationships would grow and unity would be achieved if we could recognize that we have in common what we all need. I pray that we find Love in our lives. I know that through compassion and love, unity and communion will follow. So, I long for God in my life. It is His Love that *unites* us and brings us into *communion* with one another. I can only hope that we all are united, in relationship with Jesus, so that we all can unite as sisters and brothers.

I can only long for hope. We can only hope.